
Hiking Calendar



Point Reyes Nature

2022



January

Inverness Ridge Trail

Inverness Ridge Trail and nearby Drakes View, Bucklin, and Bayview trails are a mushroom paradise in January. Visit on a clear sunny day after a rain to get views of the ocean toward Drakes Beach and Chimney Rock and to delight in the profusion of sprouting mushrooms.

Avg temp: 45-59°F

Avg rain: 8 days, 5.2 inches

Daylight hours: 10

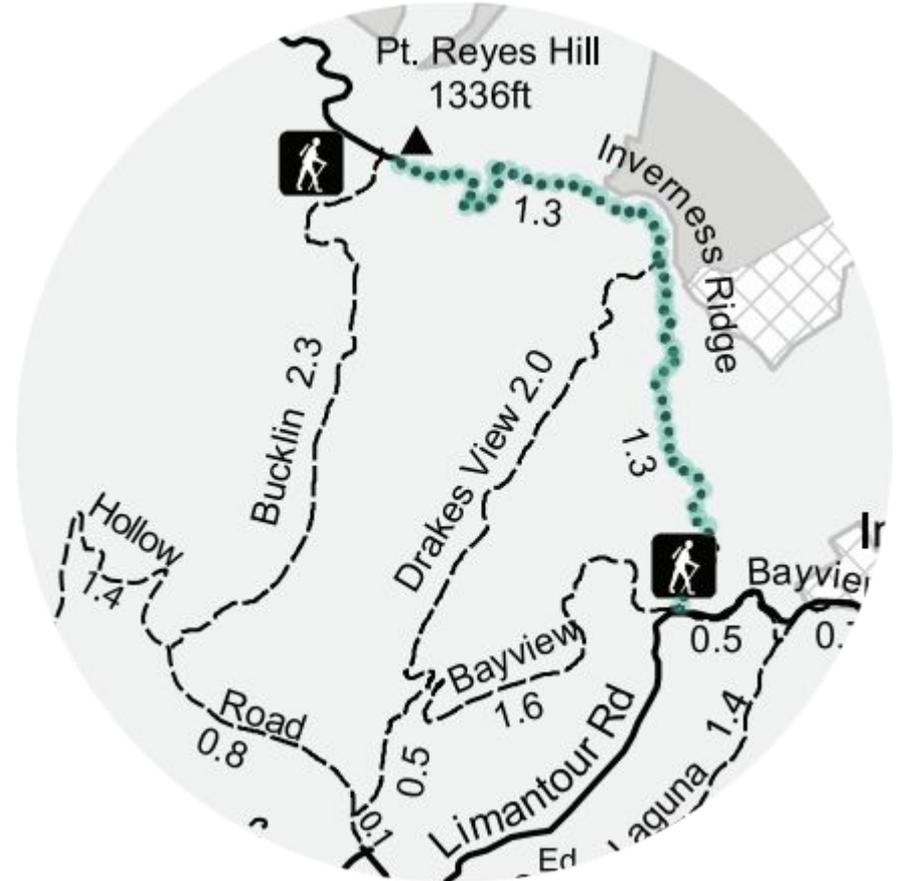
Full moon: Jan 17 at 3:49pm

Hike or bike: Inverness Ridge Trail, 5.2 miles, out and back

Mushrooms, ocean & bay views, bishop pines

Start at the Bayview Trailhead

1. Follow the Inverness Ridge Trail about a mile to the paved road. Continue up the paved road a short distance (370 feet) watching carefully for the dirt path on the left. It's easy to miss! The trail continues into the bishop pine forest.
2. Continue on the trail until you reach Mount Vision Road at the top of Point Reyes Hill. It's right before the Bucklin Trail and a radio broadcast station is on the left. Turn around and return to Bayview Trailhead.
3. To make it a loop, take the downhill Drakes View Trail (4.9 mile loop) or Bucklin Trail (7.8 mile loop) and return uphill on the Bayview trail.



[Get details about this hike](#)

January Highlights

Fresh pine scent mingles with the earthy smells of winter as fallen leaves and withered plants make their way back into the earth in the Inverness Ridge forest.

Visit [Drakes Beach](#) to see Northern Elephant Seals pupping and breeding. Volunteer docents are on hand to answer questions.

Coho salmon are spawning! Take an informative [creek walk tour](#) with local non-profit SPAWN.



Top & Bottom: Inverness Ridge Trail. Right: Fly agaric (*Amanita muscaria*), Inverness Ridge. Cover: Common Bonnet (*Mycena galericulata*) mushrooms



February

Stewart Trail Long Loop

Retreat to the forest for a peaceful winter hike or bike ride. Develop a meditative forest bathing practice to rejuvenate your spirit. At the coast, watch for birds gathering in Wildcat Lake and treat yourself to a break on the sand at WildCat Beach.

Avg temp: 46-61°F

Rain: 7 days, 5.1 inches

Daylight hours: 11

Full moon: Feb 16 at 8:57am

Hike: Stewart Trail Long Loop, 6.1-11.6 miles

Fir and mixed evergreen forest, ocean views

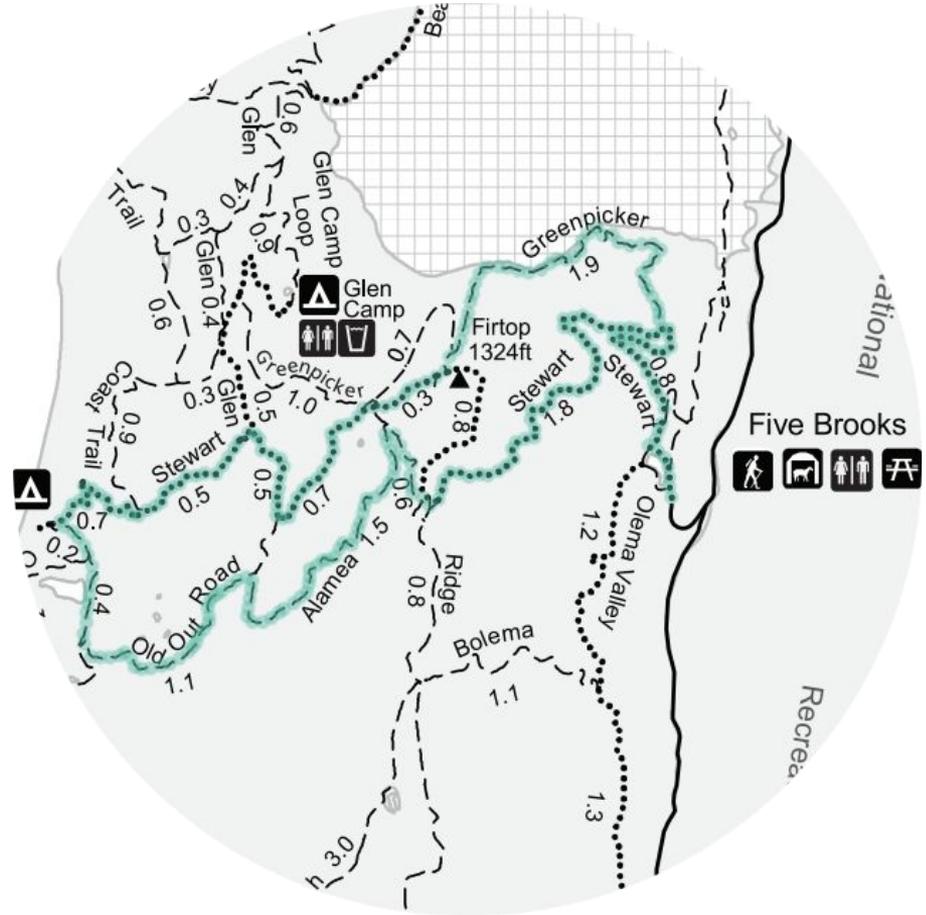
Trails: Stewart, Ridge, Alamea, Old Out Road, Coast, Greenpicker

Start at the Five Brooks trailhead

1. Follow the right side of the mill pond on the Olema Valley Trail to the Stewart Trail. Take Stewart to Ridge (2.6 miles). Go right on Ridge to Alamea Trail (0.5 miles) Follow Alamea to Old Out Road (1.5 miles). Go left on Old Out Road to Coast (1.1 miles). Go right on Coast to Stewart (0.6 miles). Optional: make a detour to WildCat Beach near WildCat campground.
2. Return on Stewart (2.7 miles) uphill to Greenpicker at Firtop. Hike Greenpicker downhill (1.9 miles) back to Stewart and the trailhead (0.8 miles). If it's rained recently, avoid the Greenpicker which turns into a mudslide. Instead, return on the Stewart.

For a shorter hike (6.1 miles), take Stewart to Greenpicker and return on Stewart at Firtop. You can also bike the entire Stewart Trail, out and back. It's an intense uphill to Firtop! Bikes are not allowed on the other trails.

[Get details about this hike](#)



February Highlights

Crisp air and fresh green flora make this loop an inviting winter hike. It's a strenuous hike (or bike ride) gradually up and over Inverness Ridge. Pace yourself by stopping to explore.

Alamea and Old Out Road are less traveled, deep forest retreats. You'll enjoy ocean views for more than a mile on the Coast and Stewart trails.

Take a forest bathing class at the [Point Reyes National Seashore Association Field Institute](#).

Read about the [California Turret Spider](#) in Bay Nature. *Turret spiders are found only in California, and only in moist woodlands...Females are thought to live 16 years, and they never wander nor even leave their burrows. Males only leave their burrows once...to find a female and mate before he dies.*



Top: California manroot tendrils entwined on red-berried elder (Alamea). Bottom: California Turret Spider's silk burrow "turret" amid moss (Greenpicker). Right: Alamea Trail. Cover: Stewart Trail



March

Bear Valley & Sky Loop

Bear Valley offers a wealth of shade-loving spring wildflowers along the moist creek banks and trails. Hike a vigorous loop from valley to coast. Look for Pacific Gray Whales in their northern migration which peaks in mid-March. Humpback whales are traveling in the opposite direction.

Avg temp: 46-64°F

Rain: 9 days, 4.3 inches

Daylight hours: 12

Full moon: Mar 18 at 12:17am

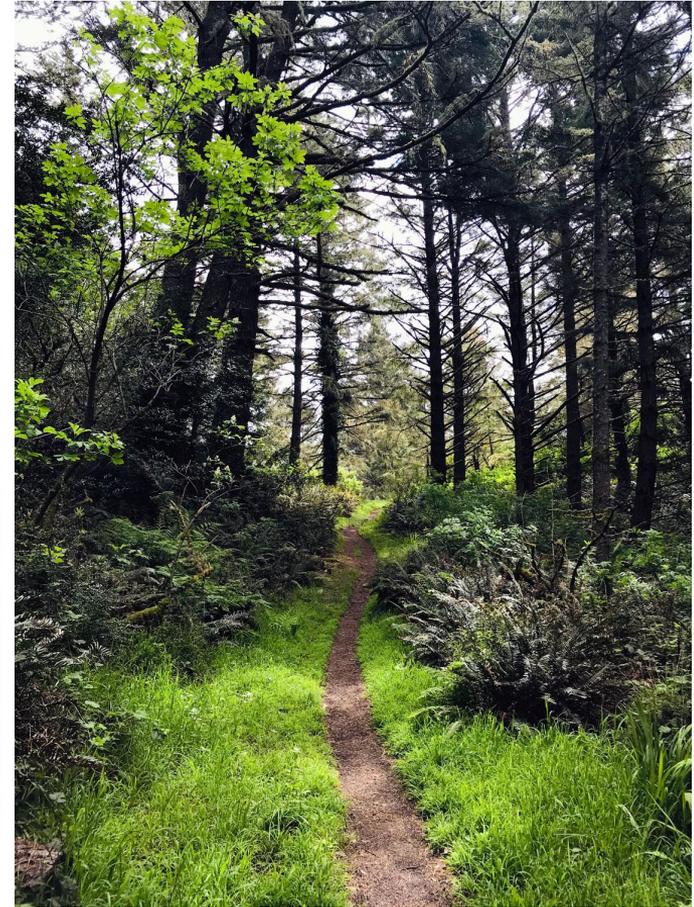
March Highlights

Life emerges dramatically! Early spring flowers bring vibrant colors to Bear Valley - magenta *Pacific Trillium*, deep pink *Pacific Bleeding Heart*, and cheerfully pink *Red-flowering Currant*.

Although the August 2020 Woodward Fire destroyed the wispy blanket of hanging moss and canopy of flowering berries on the Sky Trail, this flora will surely return with time and bring magic back to the Sky Trail.

For a fast and easy, mostly-level walk, hike Bear Valley to Divide Meadow and return (3.2 miles, out and back). It's a lovely creekside walk with plenty of wildflowers and no steep inclines.

Before heading out, get inspired by John Muir Laws to [start a nature journal](#)



Top: *Pacific Trillium* (Bear Valley). Bottom: *Pacific Bleeding Heart* (Bear Valley). Right: Sky Trail in 2020 before the Woodward Fire. Cover: *Red-flowering Currant* (Sky Trail)



April

Mount Vision Trails

Drive up scenic Mount Vision Road with views to the ocean and a bird's eye view of the Cypress tree tunnel. Explore for Checker Lily on the west end of the Inverness Ridge Trail and the Bucklin Trail. Afterwards, drive to North Beach or the Lighthouse to watch for Pacific Gray Whales on their northern migration.

Avg temp: 47-66°F

Rain: 5 days, 2.1 inches

Daylight hours: 13

Full moon: Apr 16 at 11:55am

Hike: Mt Vision trails, ~5.0 miles, out and back or 6.9 miles loop

Tomales Bay and ocean views, bishop pine forest, wildflowers

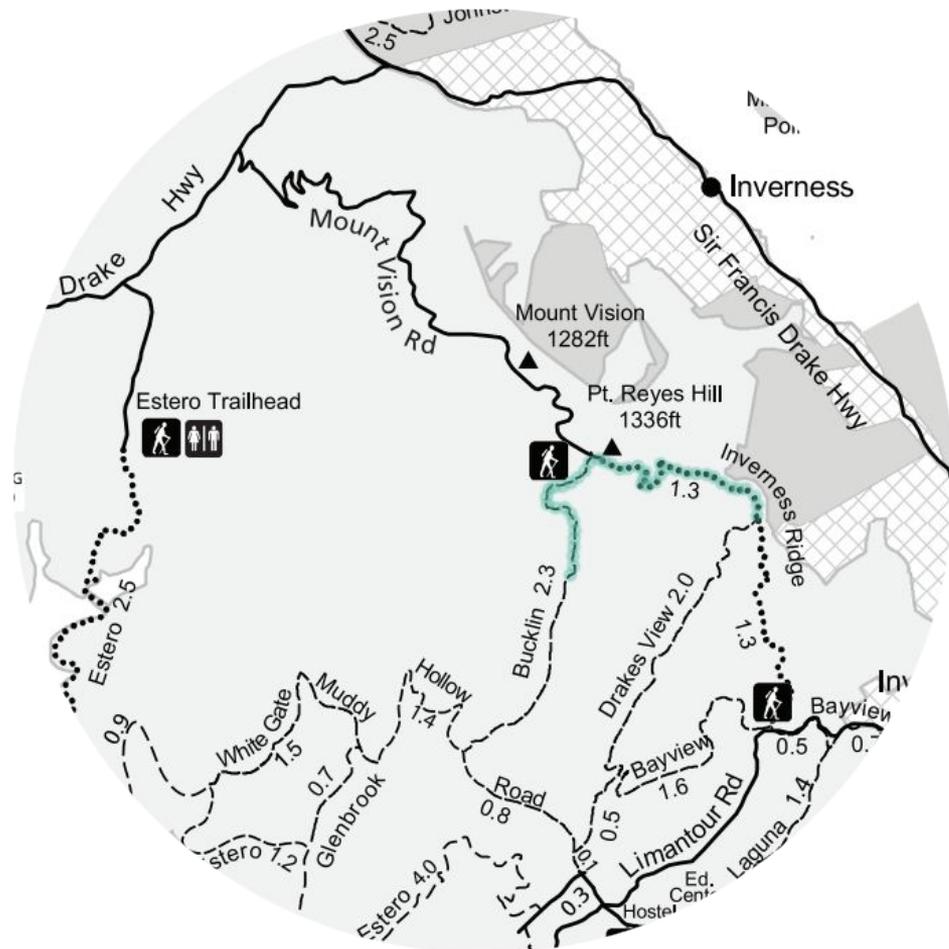
Trails: Bucklin, Inverness Ridge
Optional Drakes View, Muddy Hollow Road

A pleasant walk from the [Mt Vision Road](#) parking lot, with views to the ocean on a clear day, brings you to the Bucklin trail. The Bucklin begins with panoramic views to the distant ocean and nearby ridges. A good turnaround spot is the wood railing, less than halfway down the trail. Return to explore the [Inverness Ridge Trail](#) where you'll see Tomales Bay through the trees.

Make it a loop (6.9 miles)

Hike Inverness Ridge to [Drakes View](#) (1.3 miles). Take Drakes View downhill to [Muddy Hollow Road](#) (2.5 miles). Turn right on Muddy Hollow Road to Bucklin (0.8 miles) and return uphill (2.3 miles). It's a steep incline so bring plenty of water.

[Get details about the Bucklin Trail](#)



April Highlights

Tiny bell-shaped huckleberry flowers in white and pink clusters toll the arrival of spring. Blueblossom ceanothus is abuzz with pollinators and iconic iris sprouts gleefully in meadows and along trails. Striking red and orange paintbrush flowers add their spiky voice. Slender checker lily stalks sprout bespeckled lanterns that hide vivid yellow anthers inside.

Don't miss the [Point Reyes Birding Festival](#) on April 21-24.



Top: Huckleberry flowering (Inverness Ridge). Bottom: Douglas Iris (Bucklin). Right: Bucklin Trail with Blueblossom ceanothus in bloom. Cover: Checker Lily (Inverness Ridge).



May

Muddy Hollow Trail

Butterflies and spring blooms draw attention along the trail. Stop, breathe deeply, and observe nature in motion. Hike the Muddy Hollow Trail then enjoy a day at Limantour beach. Watch for Pacific Gray Whales on their northern migration. Cows and calves are close to shore and easier to spot.

Avg temp: 49-69°F

Rain: 2 days, 0.8 inches

Daylight hours: 14

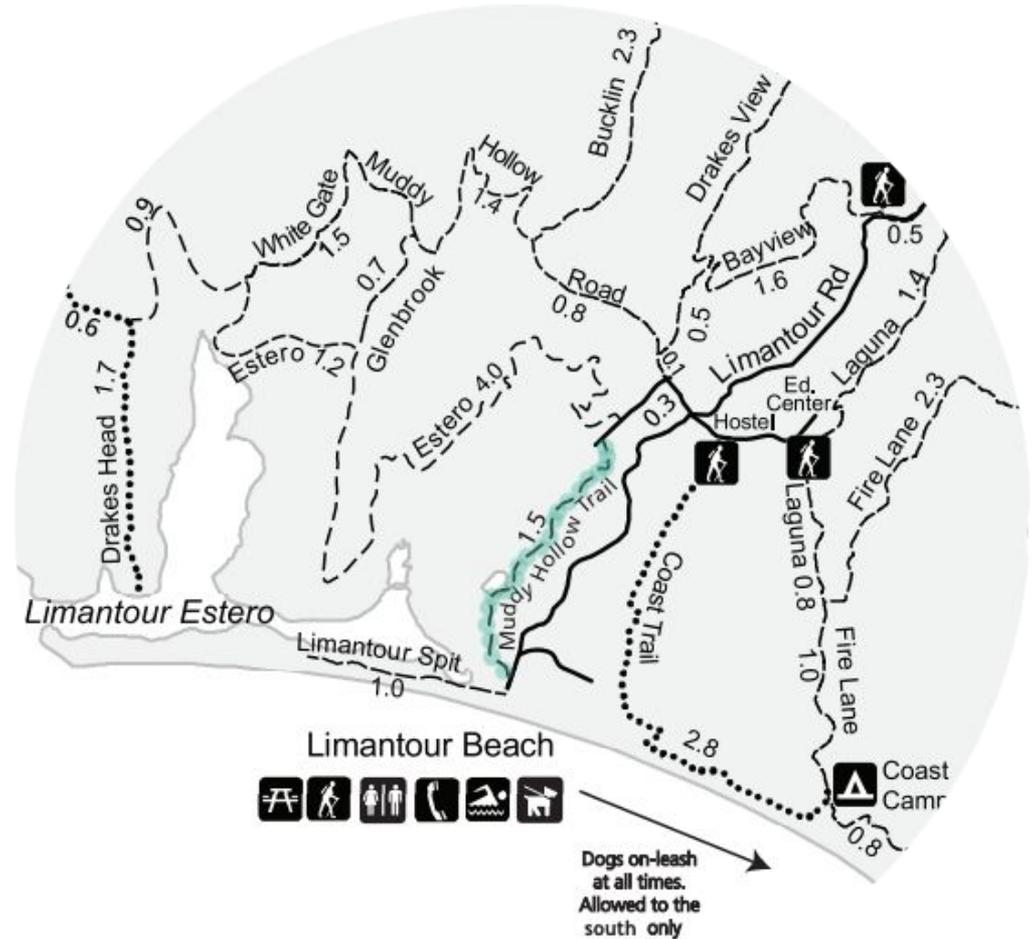
Full moon: May 15 at 9:14pm

Hike: Muddy Hollow Trail, 3.0 miles, out and back

Shady forest, marsh, wildflowers, butterflies

Park at Limantour Beach and hike the Muddy Hollow Trail which begins at the bottom of the stairs, on the right. A good place to turn around is when the dirt trail (muddy after rain!) meets the wider gravel road, near the large utility building on the left. Return to Limantour to enjoy the beach. You'll pass through an enchanted alder tree canopy with small pink and white striped candy flowers bordering the trail. Watch at muddy spots for Echo Azure butterflies (pale blue with dark spots) gathering minerals.

[Get details about this hike](#)



May Highlights

May is peak wildflower bloom and Muddy Hollow has both shade-loving flowers and sun lovers. The pond and marshes are great places to spot birds, bugs, and butterflies. You may even spot a Tule Elk in the distant hillside or a coyote or heron hunting in the marsh.

At Limantour Beach, Pacific Gray whales often swim close to shore on their way north with their young. It's a great time to relax on the beach with binoculars.

Watch for calls for volunteers for the annual butterfly count in Point Reyes, usually held in June or July. Or download the [iNaturalist](#) app and take photos of butterflies on your own to contribute to citizen science.



Muddy Hollow Trail butterflies. Top: Echo Azure gathering minerals from the mud. Bottom: Western Pine Elfyn. Right: Pacific Spiketail dragonfly. Cover: Alder canopy with candy flowers along the trail



June

Marshall Beach Trail

Golden grasses sprinkled with wildflowers and daisies border the trail. The Marshall Beach Trail offers sweeping views of Tomales Bay. Watch for signs of badgers in the pasture marked by large deep holes often with scratch marks on the sides. Some holes are dens and others are dug in pursuit of voles and gophers.

Avg temp: 52-75°F

Rain: 1 day, 0.4 inches

Daylight hours: 14.5

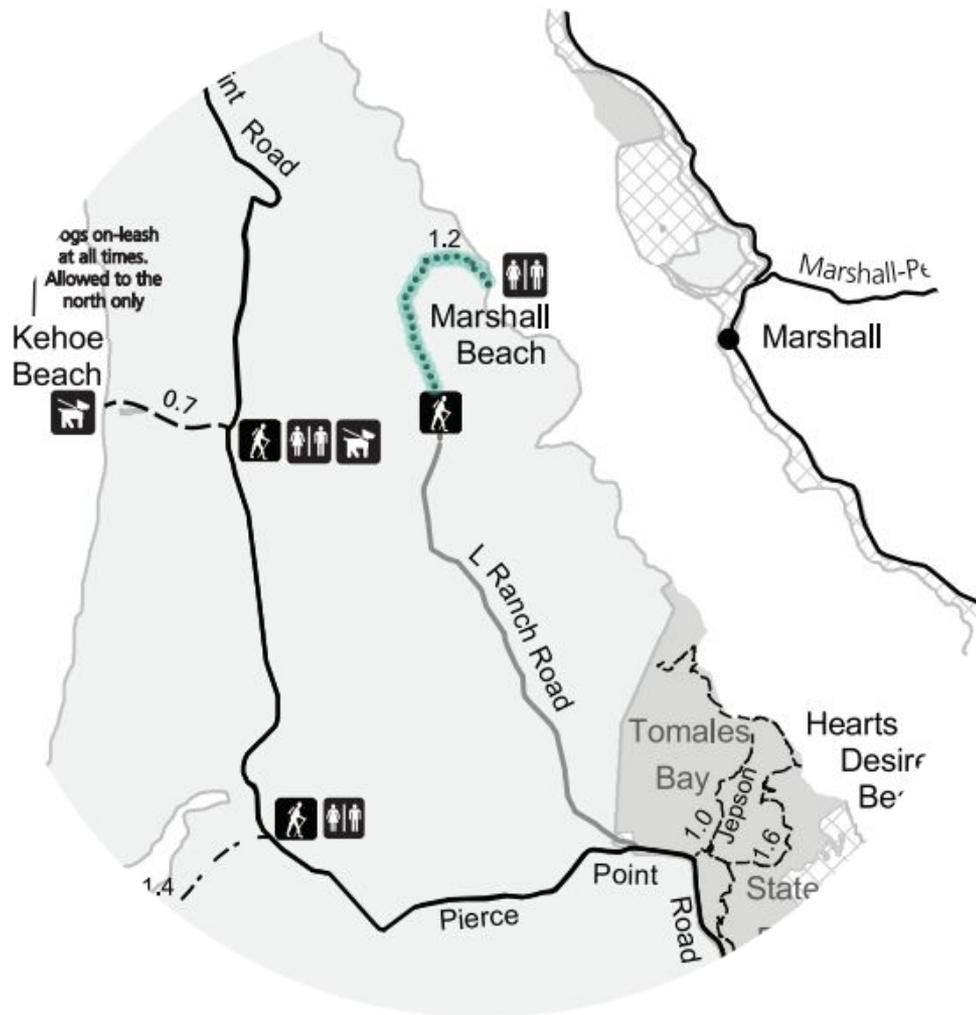
Full moon: Jun 14 at 4:52am

Hike or bike: Marshall Beach Trail, 2.4 miles, out and back

Tomales Bay views & beach, pasture, expansive views

Starting at the end of the gravel L Ranch Road, the Marshall Beach Trail is a gradual downhill hike or bike ride winding through a pasture dotted with wildflowers to the shore of Tomales Bay. The beach is one of the few boat-in camping spots in Point Reyes so expect to see campers and kayakers relaxing on the sand. Vault toilets are available at the beach. Dogs on-leash at all times. Allowed to the north only

[Get details about this hike](#)



June Highlights

June is peak season for the later-blooming purple wildflower, *Brodiaea* or cluster-lily (shown at right.) Find them in meadows, woodlands or in serpentine rocky outcroppings.

[Western Snowy Plovers](#) are beginning their breeding season on Point Reyes ocean beaches. They make nests by sweeping out a small indentation in the sand and adorning it with small white pebbles. It's nearly impossible to spot the nests. Consider volunteering as a [snowy plover docent](#).

[Harbor seals](#) are at the end of their pupping. A great place to see them is on sandbars in Drakes Estero and Bolinas Lagoon.



Top: Variable *Linanthus*. Bottom: *Brodiaea*. Right: Marshall Beach. Cover: view of Tomales Bay from the Marshall Beach Trail



July

McCurdy Trail

The McCurdy Trail is full of surprises. Golden Chinquapin shrubs are flowering and covered in bees. Take a minute to watch these busy pollinators at work. Curious chickadees will let you get close if you move slowly. Watch for raptors flying overhead. A foggy day is a great time to hike or bike this strenuous trail.

Avg temp: 53-79°F

Rain: 0 days, 0.0 inches

Daylight hours: 14.5

Full moon: Jul 13 at 11:37am

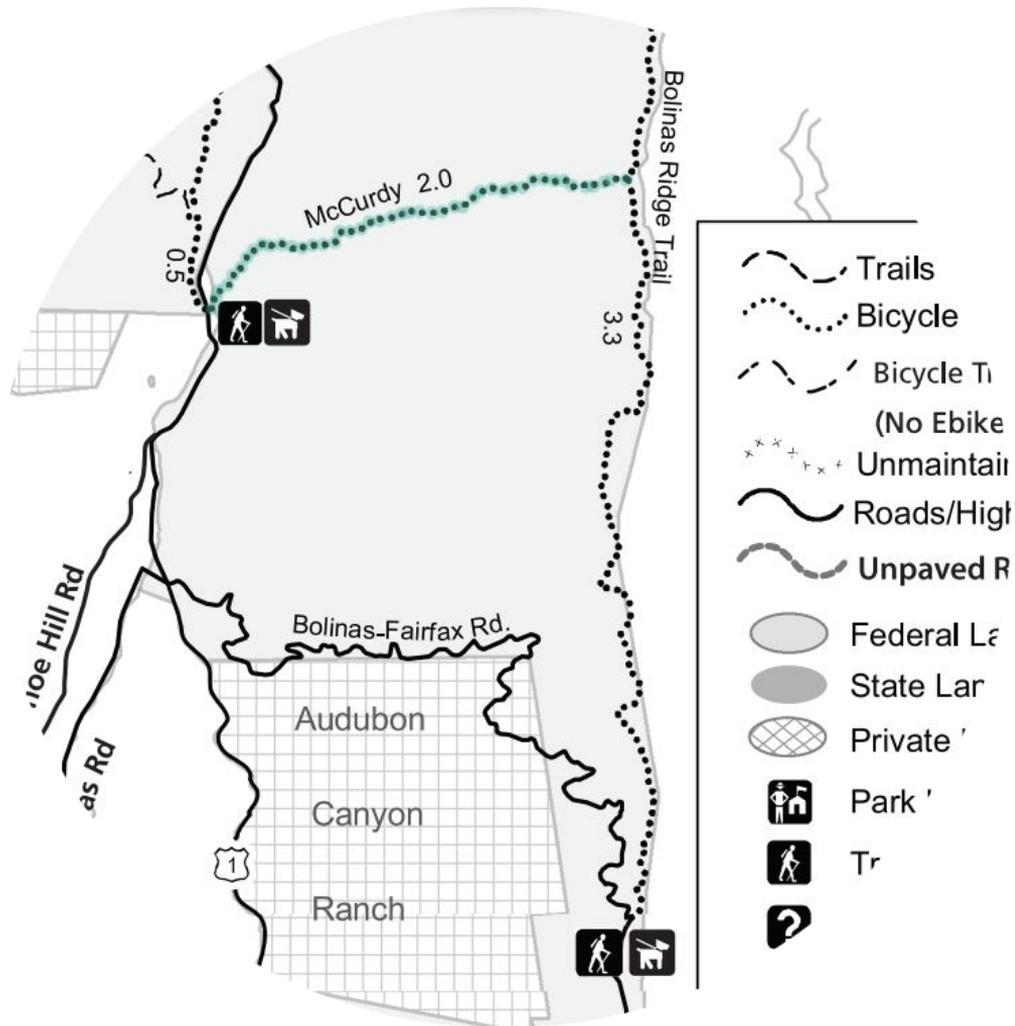
Hike or bike: McCurdy Trail, 4.0 miles, out and back

Ridge, open pasture, chaparral, fir forests, steep

It's challenging! Two miles straight uphill to the top of Bolinas Ridge and mostly exposed to the sun, but it's worth it to experience one of the most varied terrains in Point Reyes.

Start at the Olema Valley Trailhead near Bolinas. Park along Hwy 1. Cross the street to the McCurdy trailhead and begin your climb. Cross a large pasture where you are likely to see at least one Buckeye butterfly. Enter a fir forest and soon after a redwood grove, followed by rugged chaparral, and finally fir and moist redwoods again at the top where it meets the Bolinas Ridge Trail. Return the same way.

[Get details about this hike](#)



July Highlights

Along your hike, stop to admire the Golden Chinquapin shrubs filled with nuts in spiky cases. You'll recognize the shrub (which is often tree size) from the multitude of bees working the flowers.

For a longer hike, turn right at the top of the McCurdy Trail to explore the [south end of the Bolinas Ridge Trail](#). Travel from shady, moist redwood into dry, exposed chaparral and back into forest again at the trail end. From higher points, you'll have sweeping views of Bolinas and the Lagunitas watershed reservoirs. Enjoy grazing on huckleberries along your way.



Top: honeybee on Golden Chinquapin flower. Bottom: Manzanita in bloom. Right: Golden Chinquapin flowering and fruiting (spiky balls with hazelnut-size nut inside). Cover: McCurdy Trail



August

Jepson-Johnstone Loop

Forage ripe huckleberries along this forest loop of bishop pine, oak, and bay. Stop for lunch at Pebble Beach overlooking Tomales Bay. Cross three wood bridges on the Johnstone Trail and look for marsh flowers hidden among the greenery. See how many different types of ferns you notice.

Avg temp: 54-79°F

Rain: 0 days, 0.0 inches

Daylight hours: 13.5

Full moon: Aug 11 at 6:36pm

Hike: Jepson-Johnstone Loop, 2.6 miles

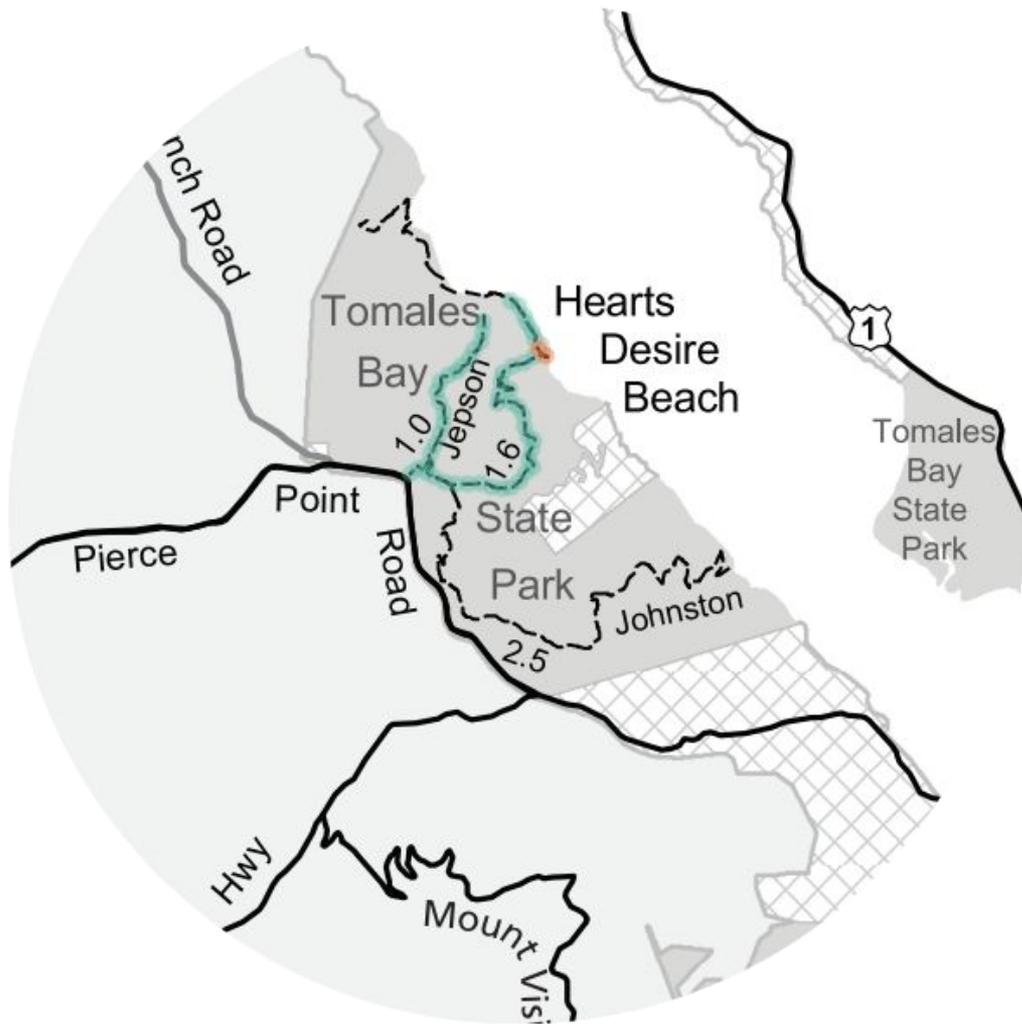
Mixed evergreen forest, beach, Tomales Bay views

Trails: Jepson, Johnstone. Optional Pebble Beach

Start at the Jepson Trailhead

1. Take the Jepson Trail to the upper parking lot (1.0 mile).
2. Turn right and walk across the parking lot to the restrooms to find the Johnstone Trail on the right.
3. Follow the Johnstone Trail trail about 20 minutes to the Pebble Beach trail.
4. Optional one-minute hike to the beach to explore.
5. Continue on the Johnstone Trail.
6. At the junction of the Johnstone to Shell Beach, stay right toward Jepson/Heart's Desire Beach. Cross the road to continue on the trail (or go left and follow the road back to the parking lot).
7. Turn left on the Jepson Trail to return to the parking lot.

[Get details about this hike](#)



August Highlights

While at Pebble Beach, watch for migrating birds feeding in Tomales Bay. Take time to explore rocks along the shore covered with limpets, mussels, and clams.

Several one-table picnic areas are dotted along the Johnstone Trail between the parking lot and Pebble Beach, some with views of Tomales Bay.

Make an aromatic forest tea while hiking (recipe below).



Top: Pale Swallowtail butterfly (Jepson Trail). Bottom: ripe huckleberries (Jepson Trail). Right: Johnstone trail picnic area overlooking Tomales Bay through the trees. Cover: Johnstone Trail boardwalk

Recipe:

Aromatic Forest Tea

Make it while hiking

1. Bring hot water in a container that will stay warm.
2. Along the trail, pick one **bay leaf** and a couple of ripe **blackberries** to add to the water.
3. Steep for an hour or so. Take a deep breath and savor the aroma. Enjoy!

Or make your own blend: wild rose petals, rose hips, fresh green fir tips, wild mint, salmonberries, raspberries, red-flowering currants, huckleberries, thimbleberries, gooseberries



Thank you to [Joey Heusler](#) for introducing this tea in her forest bathing class at the Point Reyes Field Institute.



September

Limantour Spit & Beach

The fall migration brings flocks of shorebirds and other distant visitors to the seashore. Snowy plovers are finishing their breeding season and beach closures are lifted. Watch for Tule Elk in the distant hills. Time your hike to enjoy golden sunset at the beach.

Avg temp: 55-80°F

Rain: 0 days, 0.1 inches

Daylight hours: 12.5

Full moon: Sep 10 at 2:59am

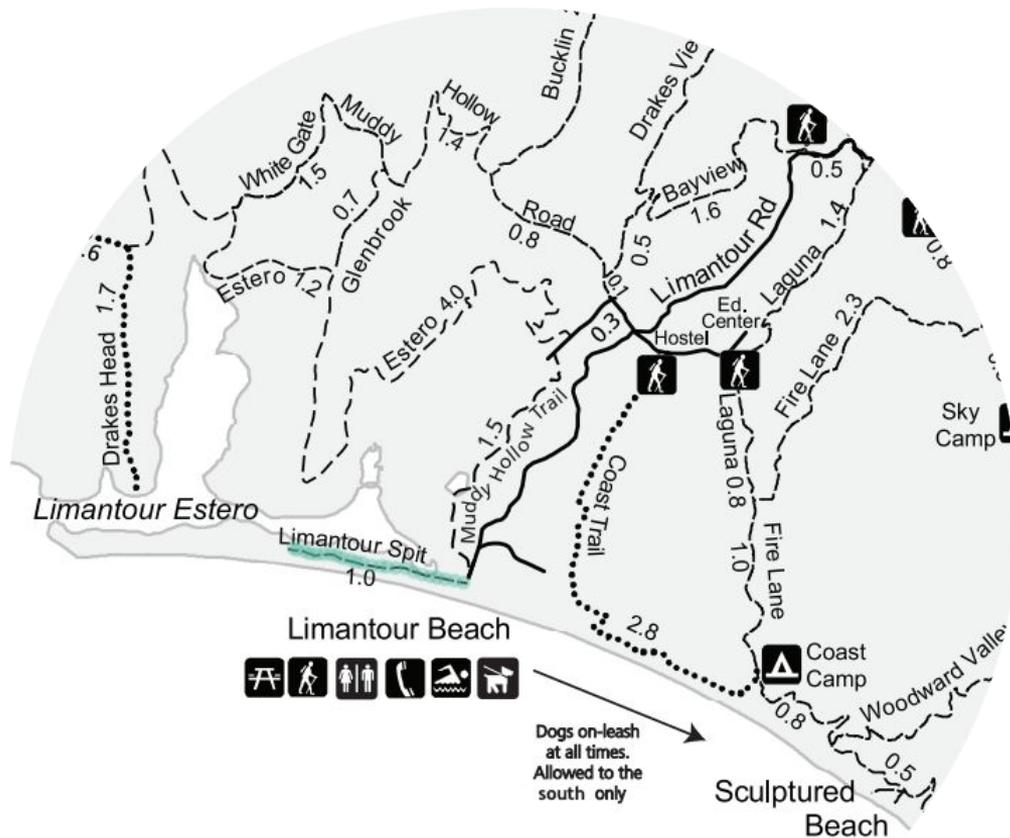
Hike: Limantour Spit & Beach, 2.0 miles, out and back

Sandy beach, whale watching, bird watching

Start at the Limantour parking lot

The Limantour Spit is a short, narrow trail that runs between the dunes and marsh. From the parking lot, follow the path down the steps to the picnic tables and toilets. Cross the bridge over the marsh toward the beach. The trailhead is on the right, between the bridge and the dunes. It's easy to miss! You'll be treated to panoramic views of the marsh and coastal scrub areas to the north and east. At many points along the trail, you can climb over the dunes and onto Limantour Beach. Walk to the end of Limantour Beach or head in the opposite direction south to explore Sculptured Beach and the abundant shorebirds in the area.

[Get details about this hike](#)

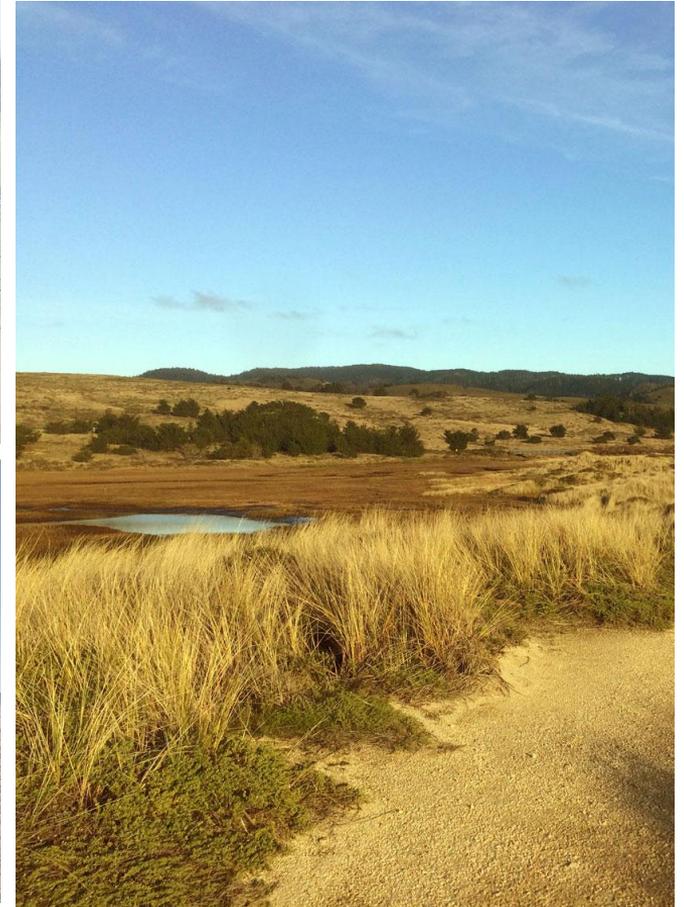


September Highlights

From Limantour Spit, watch for Tule Elk in the distant hills. Listen for the “bugling” whistle-like call of the elk, common during rutting season, July through October.

The shoreline is a gathering place for migratory shorebirds feeding on crabs and insects. Learn more about the birds of Point Reyes by taking a [Field Institute](#) birding class.

Join the [Coastal Cleanup day at Drakes Beach](#) on September 17.



Top: Western Gull on Limantour Beach. Bottom: Limantour Beach. Right: Limantour Spit Trail. Cover: Limantour Spit Trail overlooking Limantour Estero marsh.



October

Drakes Head Trail

Leopard sharks breed in the shallows of Limantour Spit and Drakes Estero in the fall. Watch for migratory birds and shorebirds along the water's edge. Visit on a cool breezy day to avoid overheating on the trail which is fully exposed to the sun.

Avg temp: 53-75°F

Rain: 4 days, 1.9 inches

Daylight hours: 11.5

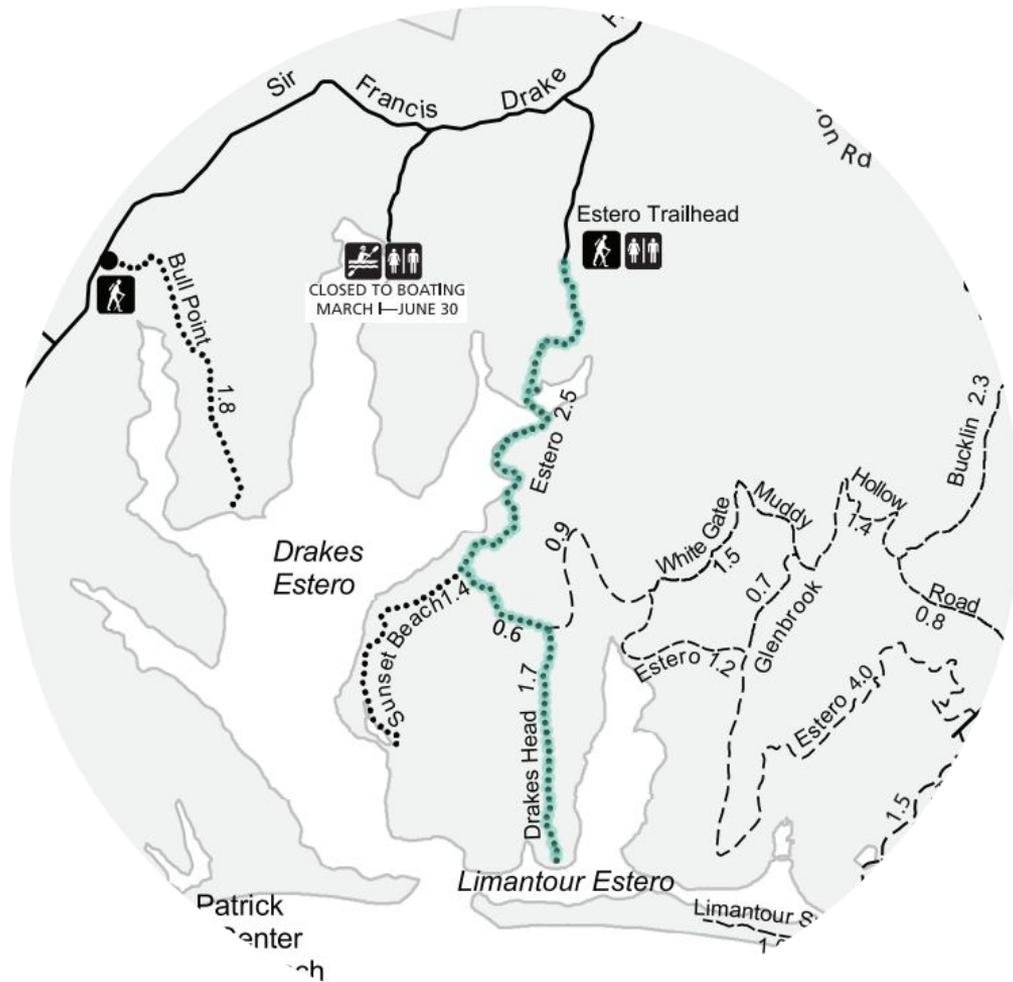
Full moon: Oct 9 at 1:55pm

Hike or bike: Drakes Head Trail, 9.6 miles, out and back

Estuary, ocean and beach overlook, marsh, pasture

Start at the Estero Trailhead

1. Follow the Estero Trail to the Drakes Head/Sunset Beach split (2.5 miles). Turn left on the Estero Trail and go uphill across the pasture to the Drakes Head Trail (0.6 miles). Watch for the trail marker on the right. It's easy to miss.
2. Turn right and go to the end of Drakes Head Trail (1.7 miles). You will be on a wide hillside cliff overlooking the joining of Limantour Estero, Drakes Estero and Drakes Bay. Watch for Leopard Sharks in the waters below.
3. The path is marked by blue arrow signs. This is necessary since the trail is faintly marked across the pasture. You are following the edge of Limantour Estero on your left so it's unlikely you will get lost.



[Get details about this hike](#)

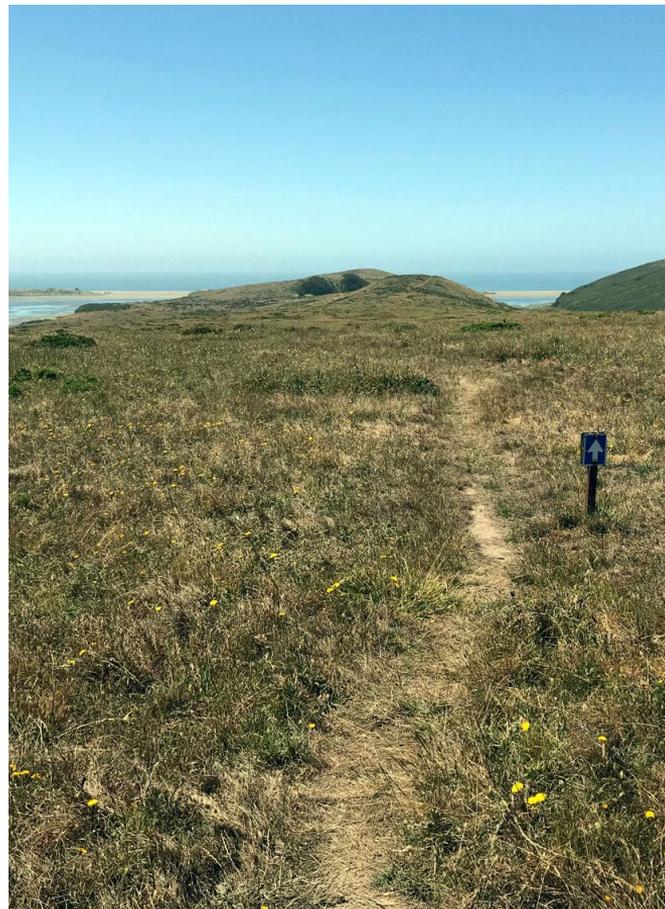
October Highlights

Fall on the Estero Trail is a great time to spot migrating birds feeding in Drakes Estero and resting in the fir forest bordering the Estero.

Watch for kestrels, hawks, and other raptors hunting in the pasture and perched on fence posts.

At the Great Beach, Drakes Beach, and Chimney Rock, Northern Elephant Seal juveniles are hauling out of the ocean to rest and spar onshore. Consider volunteering as a [Winter Wildlife Docent in Point Reyes](#). Training starts in the fall.

Save the date for *Dinner on the Pacific Plate* on October 8th. Subscribe to the [PRNSA](#) newsletter to stay current on events.



Top: End of Drakes Head overlooking Limantour Estero. Bottom: Estero Trail overlooking Drakes Estero. Right: Drakes Head Trail, blue arrow trail marker. Cover: Drakes Head looking west toward Drakes Beach and Chimney Rock.



November

Woodward Valley

Woodward Valley is a gem in Point Reyes with panoramic views from Double Point in the south to Chimney Rock and Drakes Beach in the north. Find a good sit spot on the hillside and watch for Humpback Whales beginning their southern migration.

Avg temp: 49-66°F

Rain: 6 days, 3.3 inches

Daylight hours: 10

Full moon: Nov 8 at 3:02am

Hike: Woodward Valley, 5.0-9.5 miles, two options

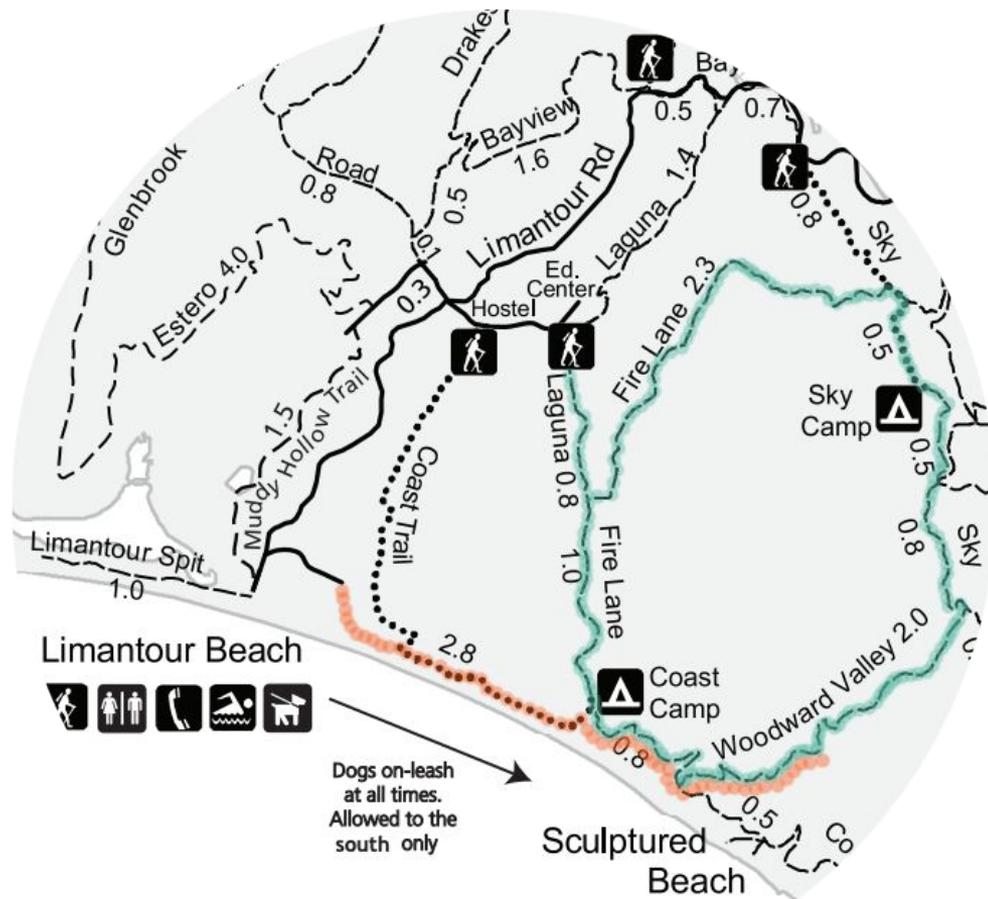
Forest route, 9.5 miles, lollipop loop (shown in green)

Start at the Laguna trailhead. Hike Laguna to Fire Lane. Turn left on Fire Lane to Sky Trail. Turn right on Sky Trail to Woodward Valley. Turn right on Woodward Valley to Coast Trail. Turn right on Coast Trail to Fire Lane. Turn right on Fire Lane which merges into Laguna Trail. Take Laguna back to the trailhead. This is a rigorous hike with inclines on most trails.

Beach route, ~5.0-8.0 miles, out and back (shown in orange)

Walk along Limantour beach to an easy spot to climb the dunes onto Coast Trail. Take Coast Trail to Woodward Valley Trail and follow it to the top of the ocean-facing hillside or hike the whole way to Sky Trail. Turn around and return the same way. The link below will provide critical details.

[Get details about these hike options](#)



November Highlights

The southward migration is going strong in the sky and in the water. Humpback Whales are beginning their ocean journey south from Alaska, and birds are headed for warmer wintering grounds. Beaches and marshes host flocks of shorebirds and waterfowl.

Fall rain brings new life to the charred burn areas in Woodward Valley.

Become a [Point Reyes National Seashore Association member](#) and join PRNSA on a monthly full moon hike.



Woodward Valley Trail. Top: fir forest. Bottom: Life emerges from the ashes! Swordfern sprouts from charred remains. Right: View toward Limantour Beach. Cover: View toward Double Point

A woman with her hair in a bun, wearing a white quilted jacket and a backpack, stands on a sandy beach. She is pointing her right hand towards a large, dark, cylindrical object lying on the sand, which is a Northern Elephant Seal. The background shows the ocean with waves and a clear blue sky. The scene is captured from a side profile of the woman.

December

Drakes Beach

Northern Elephant Seals begin to fill the beach for the breeding & pupping season which lasts through March. Stay at least 30 feet away from seals to avoid disturbing them, particularly the males who are often fighting for dominance.

December reveals the true beauty of Drakes Beach when the powerful winter storms wash away the sand and reveal the rocky world hidden below.

Avg temp: 45-59°F

Rain: 9 days, 5.0 inches

Daylight hours: 9.5

Full moon: Dec 7 at 8:08pm

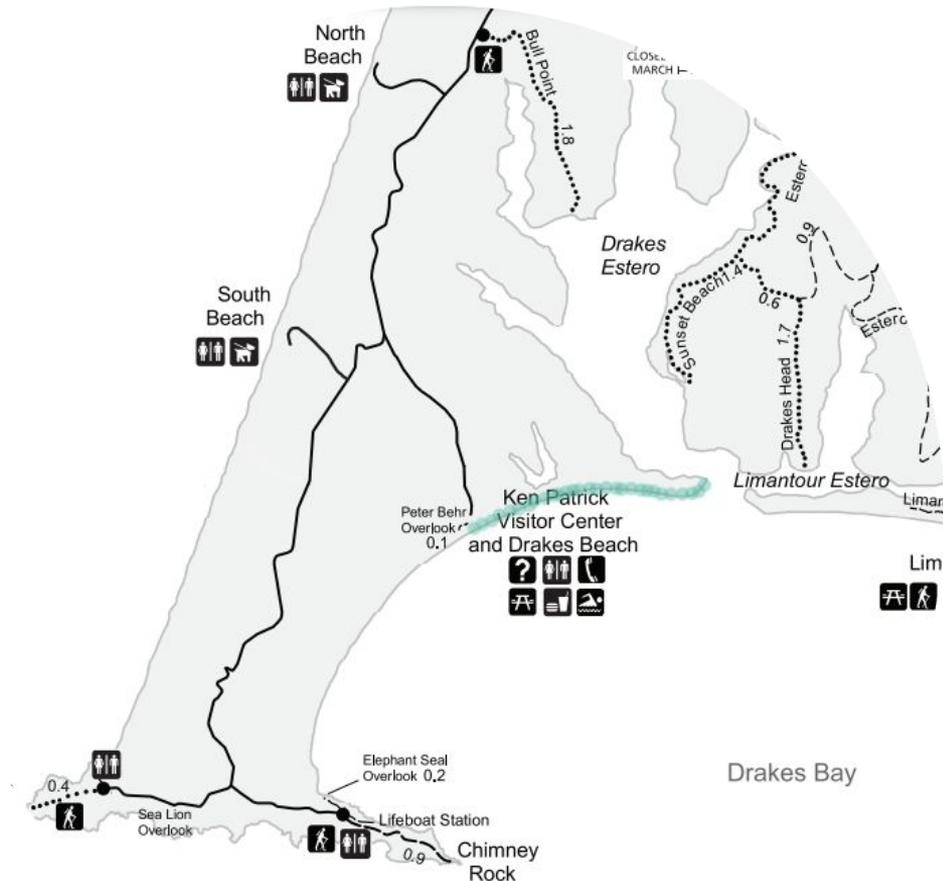
Hike: Drakes Beach, 4.0 miles, out and back

Explore south on Drakes Beach (highlighted in green on the map). Walk past Horseshoe pond to the end of the beach where you'll have great views across to Limantour Beach and Drakes Head. Visit the peaceful and beautiful Estero side of the beach. Watch for Harbor seals on the sandbar and Great Egrets roosting in the pines near the shore. Tule Elk can sometimes be seen on the hillside.

The west side of Drakes Beach is permanently closed to protect the Northern Elephant Seals.

Drakes Beach is a Marine Protected Area (MPA) which means you cannot take anything from the beach (except trash!) and fishing is prohibited.

[Get details about this hike](#)



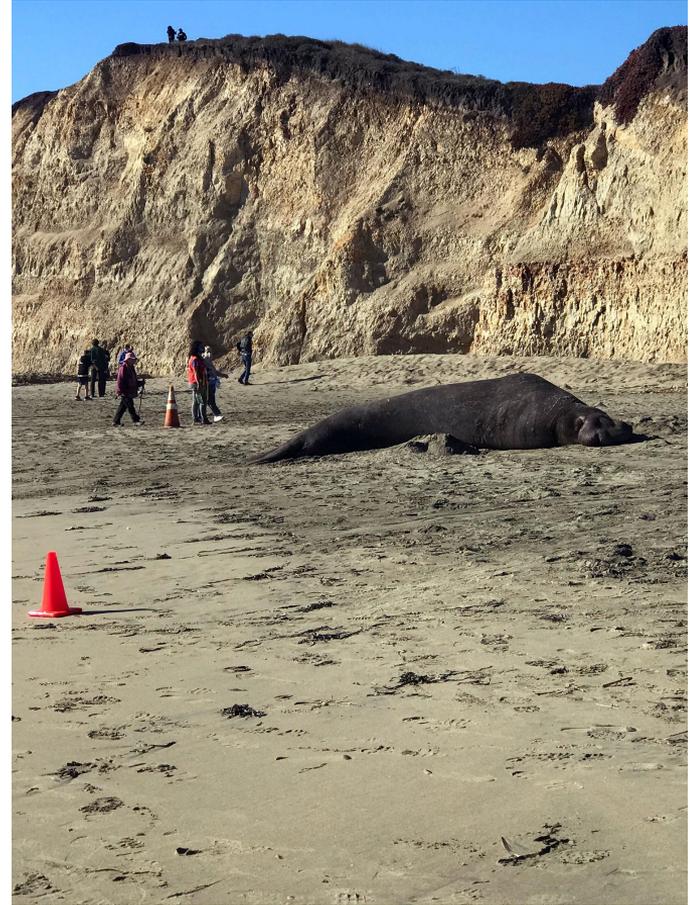
December Highlights

Spend a few minutes with the Winter Wildlife Docent volunteers in red vests to learn about elephant seals and other marine mammals. Peer through their scopes to see birds, seals, and other wildlife up close.

Watch for Humpback and Pacific Gray whales on their southern migration.

Toward the end of December, visit the Leo T Cronin fish viewing area or other creeks in Lagunitas and Point Reyes to watch for spawning Coho Salmon.

Consider volunteering for [Marin MPA Watch](#) to monitor the health of Drakes Beach by doing a simple inventory of beach activities. It's basically a walk on the beach!



Top: rocky outcroppings visible after winter storms wash away the sand. Bottom: Wimbrel and gulls on the shoreline. Right: Northern Elephant Seal on Drakes Beach and docent. Cover: Northern Elephant Seal resting on Drakes Beach.